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L'étude vise à poursuivre certaines recherches comparant les attitudes et les comportements d'élèves anglophones inscrits dans des cours d'immersion française et d'autres suivant l'enseignement régulier vis-à-vis les francophones. Plus précisément, il s'agit de savoir comment l'élève se situe par rapport à ses parents, ses amis, ainsi que divers groupes ethnolinguistiques. L'hypothèse de départ est qu'il existe une différence entre les attitudes des deux groupes d'élèves.

L'enquête a eu lieu à l'automne 1977 auprès de deux classes de sixième année de la région de Montréal: 18 élèves inscrits dans un programme d'immersion française depuis la maternelle ou la première année et 33 suivant l'enseignement régulier. Outre un questionnaire servant à recueillir certaines informations personnelles, une échelle d'attitudes a été utilisée.

Les deux groupes d'élèves présentent une configuration d'attitudes identique d'un point de vue ethnolinguistique. Toutefois, les écarts entre francophones et anglophones sont perçus comme moins considérables par les élèves des classes d'immersion; ceux-ci sont portés à percevoir davantage de similarité entre les différents groupes ethnolinguistiques. De façon générale, malgré l'analogie entre les prises de position des deux groupes, les perceptions des élèves de l'enseignement régulier sont plus extrêmes que celles des élèves des classes d'immersion.

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FRENCH IMMERSION AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEMSELVES AND OTHERS: AN ETHNOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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The introduction and proliferation of French Immersion programs since the mid-'60s were accompanied by extensive and systematic investigations of the academic, linguistic and cognitive development of the participating students. There has been relatively less research activity in the domain of social development. There are at least two ways in which participation in a French Immersion program along with its concomitant exposure to the French language and French-speaking people might be expected to affect social development. One of these concerns the students' perceptions and attitudes toward the target language group, French Canadians; the other concerns the students' perceptions of themselves as members of an ethnolinguistic group.

With respect to the first issue, Lambert and his colleagues at McGill report that students participating in the Early French Immersion program of the South Shore Regional Protestant School Board tend to view French Canadians more positively along a number of evaluative dimensions than do students participating in a regular English program(Cziko, Holobow & Lambert, 1977; Lambert & Tucker, 1972). Similar investigations carried out with students in the Grade 7 Immersion programs of the PSBGM have failed to find similar effects (Genesee, Morin & Allister, 1974). A survey carried out with graduating students in the Early and Grade 7 Immersion programs of the PSBGM did find, on the other hand, that Immersion students expressed a greater willingness to use French in different situations and a greater sense of comfort and confidence in such situations than did students who had been following the regular English with FSL program (Genesee, 1977).

Assessment of individuals' attitudes toward members of other ethnolinguistic groups is at best difficult. Respondents are often conscious of and sensitive to socially expected and, therefore, socially appropriate responses to direct questions concerning attitudes. Thus, it becomes difficult to determine real feelings accurately. Indirect measures of a less evaluative sort, such as curiosity toward or willingness to interact with members of other groups,might yield more accurate

and more meaningful indices of students' feelings toward others.

With respect to the issue of students' perceptions of themselves, Genesee, Tucker and Lambert(1978) found that, in contrast to anglophone students in regular English programs, anglophone students in grades 1 and 2 of Immersion and all-French schools showed a tendency to identify somewhat with French-speaking ethnolinguistic groups, i.e., French Canadians and persons from France. This was particularly true of the students who were attending all-French schools where most of their peers as well as their teachers were French-speaking. Identity was defined here in terms of how similar the student reported he was to different ethnolinguistic groups. However, when the investigation was extended to include older children from the same schools, i.e., grades 3, 4 and 5, the identification profiles of the students in the Immersion and all-French schools were found to be essentially identical to those of students in the regular English program. That is to say, the students in the two types of French programs no longer reported a stronger sense of identity with the French-speaking group than did the students in the English program. These data seemed to indicate that for these particular students at least the culture of the family and of their extracurricular milieux were pre-eminent in determining their ethnic identity.

The current study was intended to pursue this question further. Grade 6 students in the Immersion program and in the regular English program were asked to compare themselves with a number of significant others, such as my parents and a friend,and with a number of other ethnolinguistic groups, such as English Canadians and French Canadians. The working hypothesis of the study was that, in contrast to students who had followed the regular English program,students who had participated in the Early Immersion program until the end of grade 6 would see themselves differently vis-à-vis significant others and vis-à-vis other ethnolinguistic groups. There was no <u>a priori</u> expectation concerning the nature of the differences.

Method

The Samples

Two classes of grade 6 students, one Immersion (n=18) and one English (n=33), in the same school, participated. The school is located in a predominantly English suburb in the west end of the Island of Montreal.

Certain background information was gathered from the students by means of a questionnaire. Responses to the questionnaire revealed the following about these students. Equal percentages of children from both groups were born in Canada (Immersion - 89%, or 16/18; English 88%, or 29/33). More Immersion students (89%, or 16/18) reported that they used only English at home than did English students (79%, or 26/33). Of the students from the two groups who reported that not only English was used, eight reported that English along with another language was used at home, including six cases of French and English and one case of Chinese and English; only one student, from the English group, reported that a language other than English was used exclusively at home.

The students from the Immersion groups rated their mothers' and their fathers' competence in French approximately at the same level as the students from the English group. On the other hand, the Immersion students rated their own competence in French considerably higher than did the English students (Immersion - 1.33; English - 5.21; on an 11-point scale with 1 being "very well" and 11 being "not at all"). At the same time, however, there was relatively little difference in the students' ratings of how much they enjoyed speaking French (Immersion - 4.22; English - 5.75), although the Immersion students did express somewhat more enjoyment (1 on the scale represented enjoys speaking French "very much" and 11 represented "not at all").

Finally, all of the Immersion students and 88% of the English students (i.e., 29/33) reported that they had <u>always</u> been in their respective programs.

Three of the English students reported that they had been in French Immersion in Kindergarten and one reported having been in a French School until grade 3.

Thus, the overriding difference between these two groups of students was their participation in the Immersion or English program with its resultant influence on their French language skills. To a lesser extent, there was a greater use of another language, and in most cases French, used along with English in the homes of the English students than in the homes of the Immersion students.

The Questionnaire

The students were asked to complete a second questionnaire in which they made pairwise comparisons among 14 different concepts. The concepts included two significant others (my parents and a friend), two regional concepts (a Canadian, a Quebecker), three linguistic concepts (an English-speaking person, a French-speaking person, and a bilingual) and a number of ethnolinguistic concepts (an English Canadian, a French Canadian, a Greek Canadian, an Italian Canadian, an American, and a French person from France). In addition, the concept "Myself" was included. The students were asked to form impressions of each concept and then to rate their degree of similarity/dissimilarity to one another. They made these ratings on a nine-point scale, with 1 being "very similar" and 9 being "very different". All possible pairs of concepts were presented to each student in a random order. There were 91 such comparisons. Thus, for example, the student compared "Myself" with all other concepts. An example page from the questionnaire is presented as Appendix A. The questionnaires were completed anonymously.

Data Analysis

The similarity matrices which were generated by having each concept

compared to all other concepts were analyzed using a multidimensional scaling procedure developed by Ramsay (1977). The matrices for each school group were analyzed as a group and separately from the matrices of the other group.

The purpose of this procedure is to represent the students' subjective psychological judgements in multidimensional, Euclidean space. In other words, this method of analysis transforms the students' similarity judgements into spatial distances which can be represented graphically. Thus, concepts which are judged by the students to be very similar are plotted close together on the graph while concepts which are judged to be very dissimilar are plotted at a corresponding distance from one another on the graph.

One, two, three or more spatial dimensions will be used to represent the concepts on the graph depending upon how many dimensions the students have used to make their judgements. For example, if the students make a simple distinction between "people who are English-speaking" and "people who are French-speaking", then the graph generated by the analysis will have one dimension with those concepts which are judged to be related to "English-speaking" being clustered at one end, those concepts which are judged to be related to "French-speaking" being clustered at the other end, and all other concepts being located somewhere in between. On the other hand, if the students also distinguish between "Canadians" and "non-Canadians", then a two dimensional representation will be generated, with one dimension being Canadian/non-Canadian and the other being English-speaking/French-speaking. The farther along a dimension a particular concept is located, the more it is related to that aspect of the dimension.

Interpretation

Two dimensional solutions were generated for both the Immersion and

English groups. These are presented in Figures 1 and 2, respectively. The same scale has been used in presenting the vertical and horizontal dimensions for both figures. In this way it is possible to make direct comparisons between distances in the two groups. The vertical axis of Figure 1 goes from positive to negative, while in Figure 2 the reverse is true. This inversion was done in order to present the concepts with the same vertical orientation in the two groups; it has no other substantive effect on the results.

One dimension for both groups appears to reflect an English-speaking/French-speaking distinction with concepts related to "English-speaking" being placed near the top of the graph and concepts related to "French-speaking" being located at the bottom of the graph. The other dimension for both groups might be labelled "people like me" and "people not like me". "People like me" are placed on the left of the graph while "people not like me" are placed on the right. The actual axes along which the concepts fall do not necessarily coincide with the vertical and horizontal axes provided by the graph. A more appropriate placement of the actual axes is suggested in Figures 1B and 2B. The end points of each dimension, however, are usually defined by the concepts or items which are located at the extremities of the graph's vertical and horizontal axes; thus, the labels suggested above.

A number of points are worth mentioning about these results. First, the relative placement of the concepts is generally the same for both groups of students; there are no major discrepancies between the two graphs. Thus, there are four major clusterings. One includes Myself, my parents, and stimulus persons who are explicitly associated with English (i.e., an English Canadian, an English-speaking person, and an American. It is

interesting to note in this respect that the Immersion students place the concept "Myself" within the English cluster, as do the English students. Another cluster includes concepts which are explicitly related to French (i.e., a French Canadian, a French-speaking person, and a French person from France). In between these two are the concepts a bilingual, a Quebecker, and to some extent a Canadian. The final cluster includes Italian and Greek Canadian. These latter two concepts are probably seen in isolation because they are unique relative to the other concepts. Thus, both groups of students have demonstrated that they perceive these four distinct clusters and that they perceive them in the same basic relationship to one another.

However, the graphs differ with respect to the distances between the various clusters and concepts. The concepts are much more dispersed in the case of the English students than in the case of the Immersion students, bearing in mind that the two graphs are drawn according to the same scale. Or, in psychological terms, the Immersion students seem to perceive more overall similarity among the concepts than do the English students. This has as an effect the result that the different concept clusters are viewed as more closely related, or as less distinct, by the Immersion students. In particular, the Immersion students perceive the "English-speaking cluster" and the "French-speaking cluster" to be closer together, bridged by the "Canadian-bilingual-Quebecker cluster". From a more general perspective, one could interpret these results to reflect a more moderate perception of their ethnolinguistic environment on the part of the Immersion students.

The more moderate perspective of the Immersion students is also evident from their placement of the concept "Myself". In the case of the English students, this concept is located at the extreme end of the vertical and horizontal axes; although this is difficult to establish clearly from the

graph, it is evident from the numerical coordinates. In the case of the Immersion students, on the other hand, the concept "Myself" is not located at the end point of either axis, instead "a French person from France" occupies the extreme left-hand side of the horizontal axis and "an English-speaking person" occupies the extreme top end of the vertical axis. Thus, the English students seem to be using themselves to anchor one end of both dimensions, whereas the Immersion students seem to be using different concepts besides themselves.

It is also interesting to note the students' placement of the concept "Myself" within the English cluster and in relationship to the French cluster. While in the case of the English students, Myself is located on the outside edge of the English cluster, thereby being removed from all other clusters and especially the French one, in the case of the Immersion students, Myself is located more internally, with the resulting effect that Myself is located closer to the bilingual-Quebecker cluster and the French cluster. This discrepancy in the location of the concept "Myself" is not dramatic, but is noteworthy.

Conclusions

The results which have been discussed above cannot be interpreted in terms of cause-effect relationship; that is, that the students' perceptions of different ethnolinguistic concepts are due to or influenced by their participation in the Immersion or the English program. Rather these relationships can only be viewed as associated; that is, participation in these different programs was associated with these patterns of perceptions.

Three characteristics of the configurations were noted:

(1) The Immersion students and the English students had the same basic ethnolinguistic configuration;

(2) The Immersion students perceived more overall similarity among the ethnolinguistic concepts given for consideration than did the English students; in particular, the two major clusters of English and French were closer together in the case of the Immersion students, with the bilingual-Quebecker cluster forming a more obvious bridge between them than in the case of the English students; and

(3) the Immersion students tended to view themselves in a less extreme way on both dimensions; this had as an effect the perception of themselves as somewhat closer to the French cluster, while at the same time still perceiving themselves to be within the English cluster.

In summary, these findings suggest that the Immersion students have maintained a basic identity with an English ethnolinguistic reference group. At the same time, the Immersion students perceived the two major ethnolinguistic groups in their community, "the English"and the"French", in somewhat closer proximity to one another. It is not possible with these data alone to establish the basis of these perceptions, be it their school experience, their family background, or an interaction between the two. Additional research would be needed to trace the contributing factors.

FIGURE 1A: TWO DIMENSIONAL SOLUTION FOR IMMERSION STUDENTS

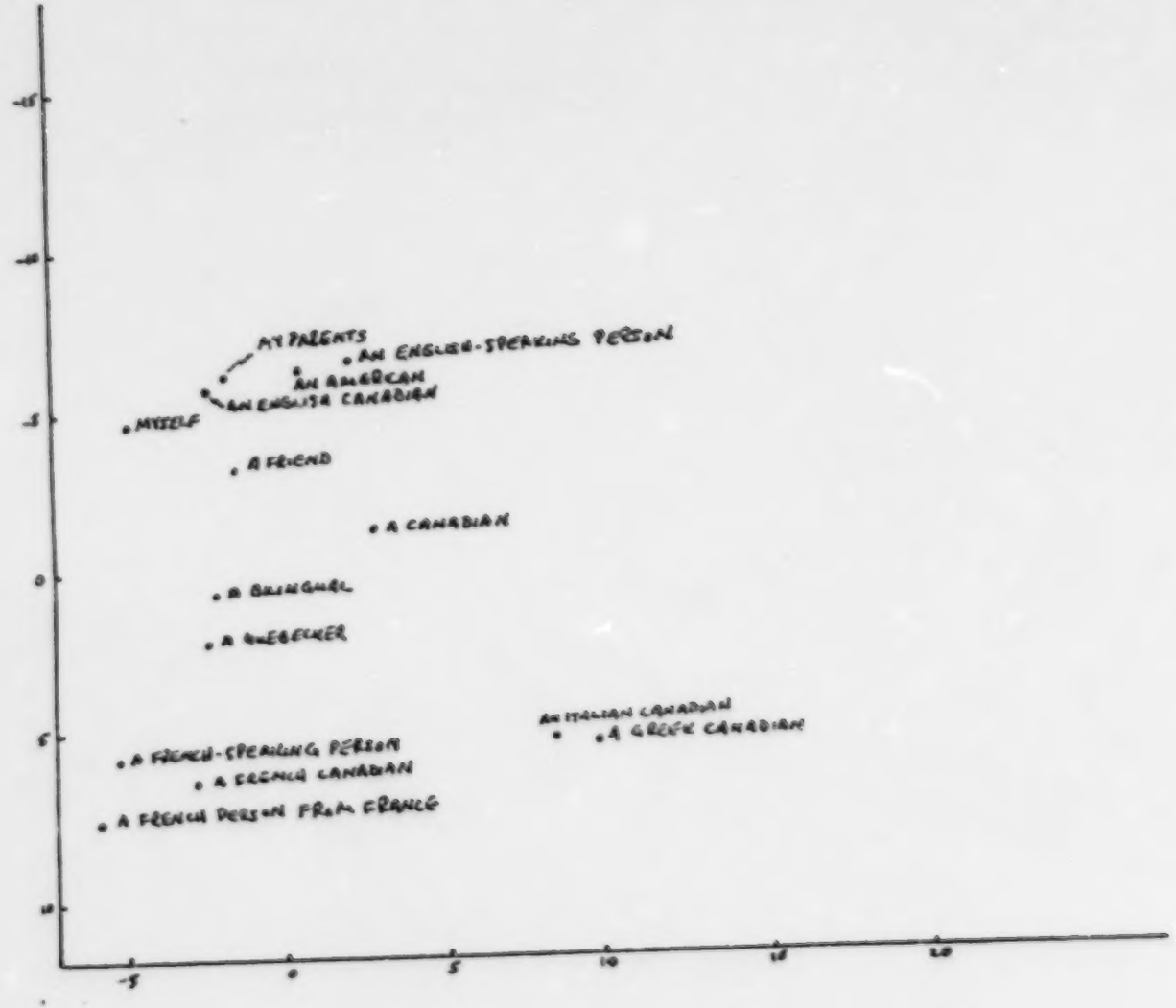


FIGURE 18: TWO DIMENSIONAL SOLUTION FOR IMMERSION STUDENTS WITH SUGGESTED AXES

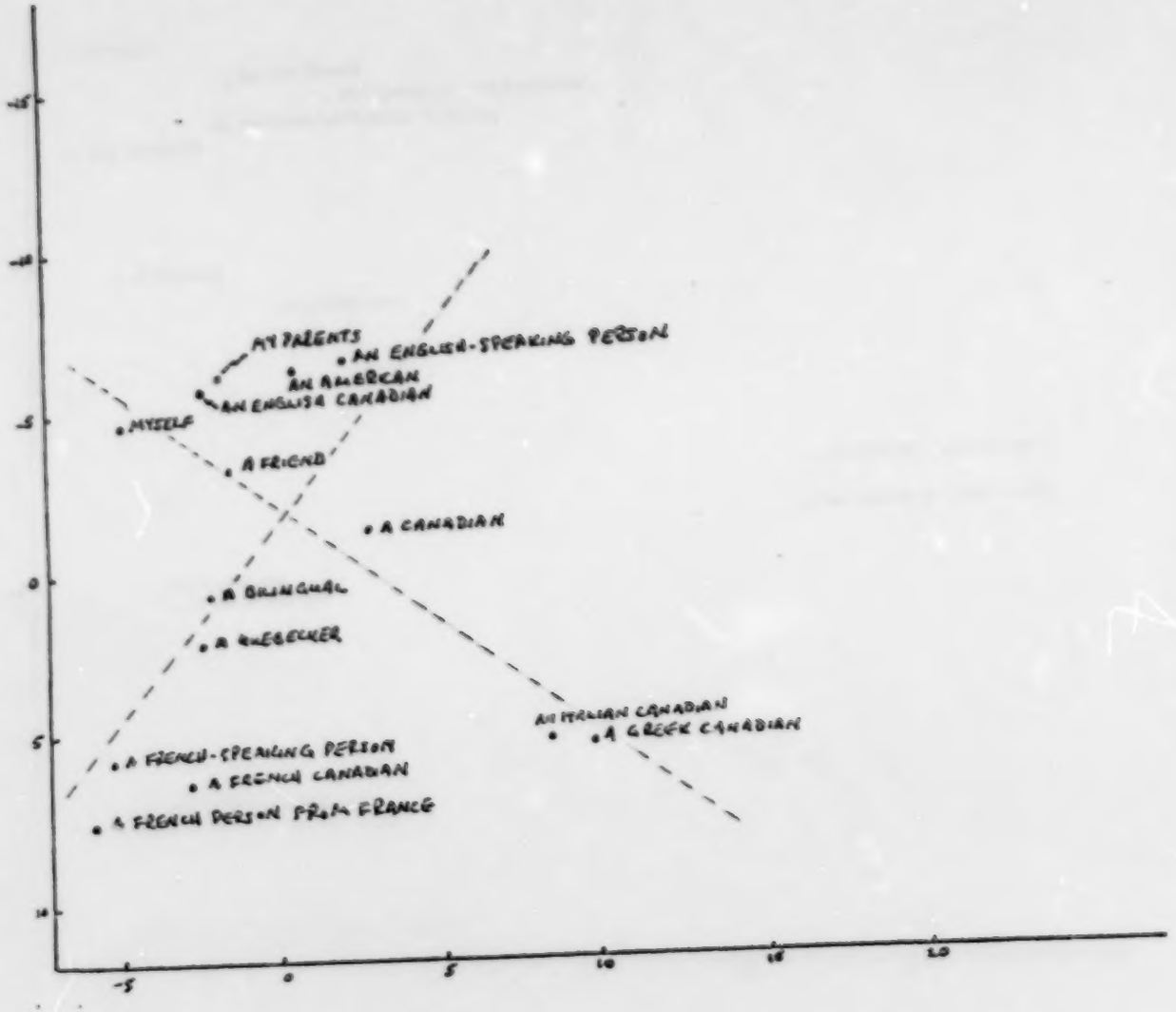


FIGURE 2A: TWO DIMENSIONAL SOLUTION FOR ENGLISH STUDENTS

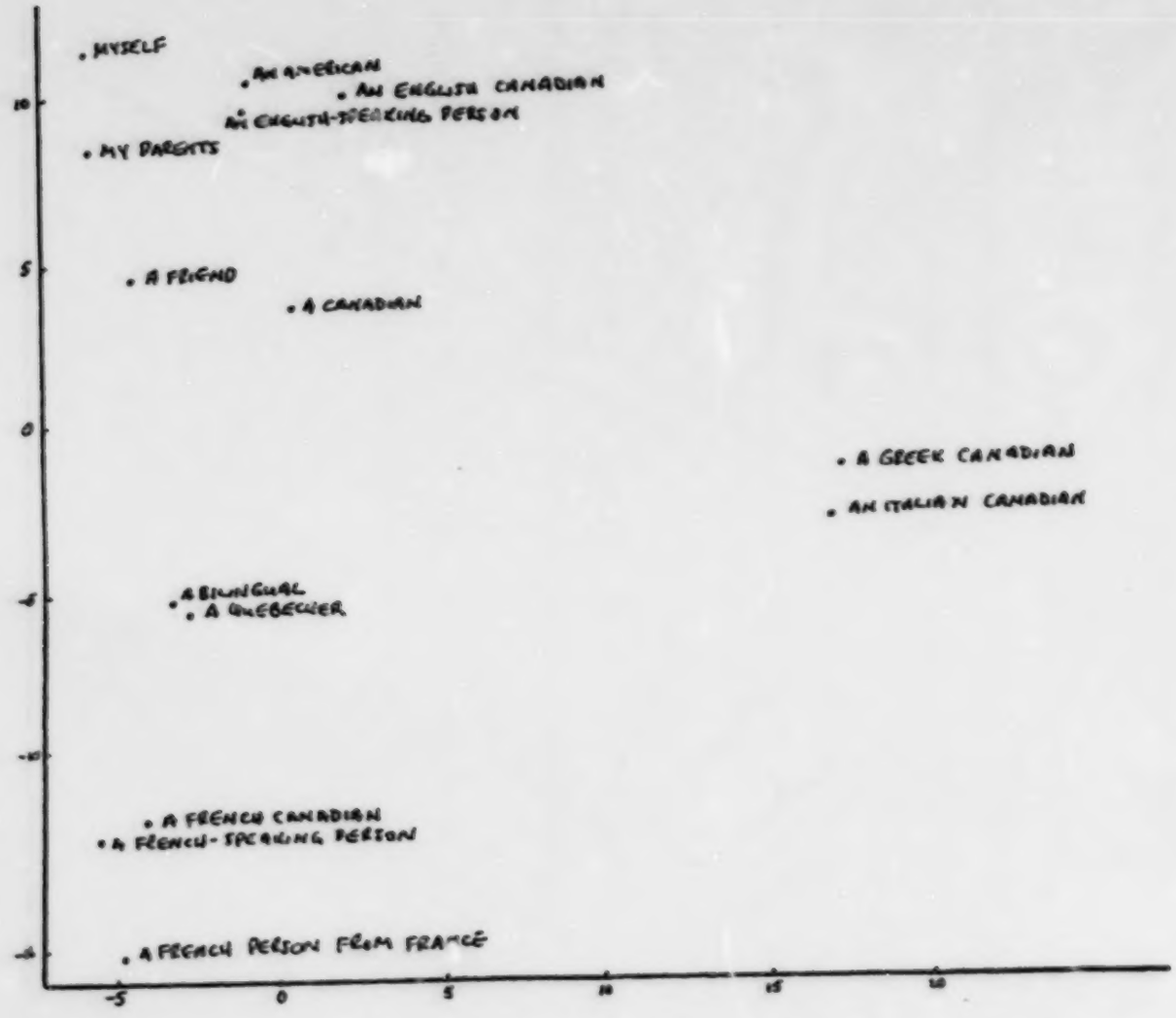
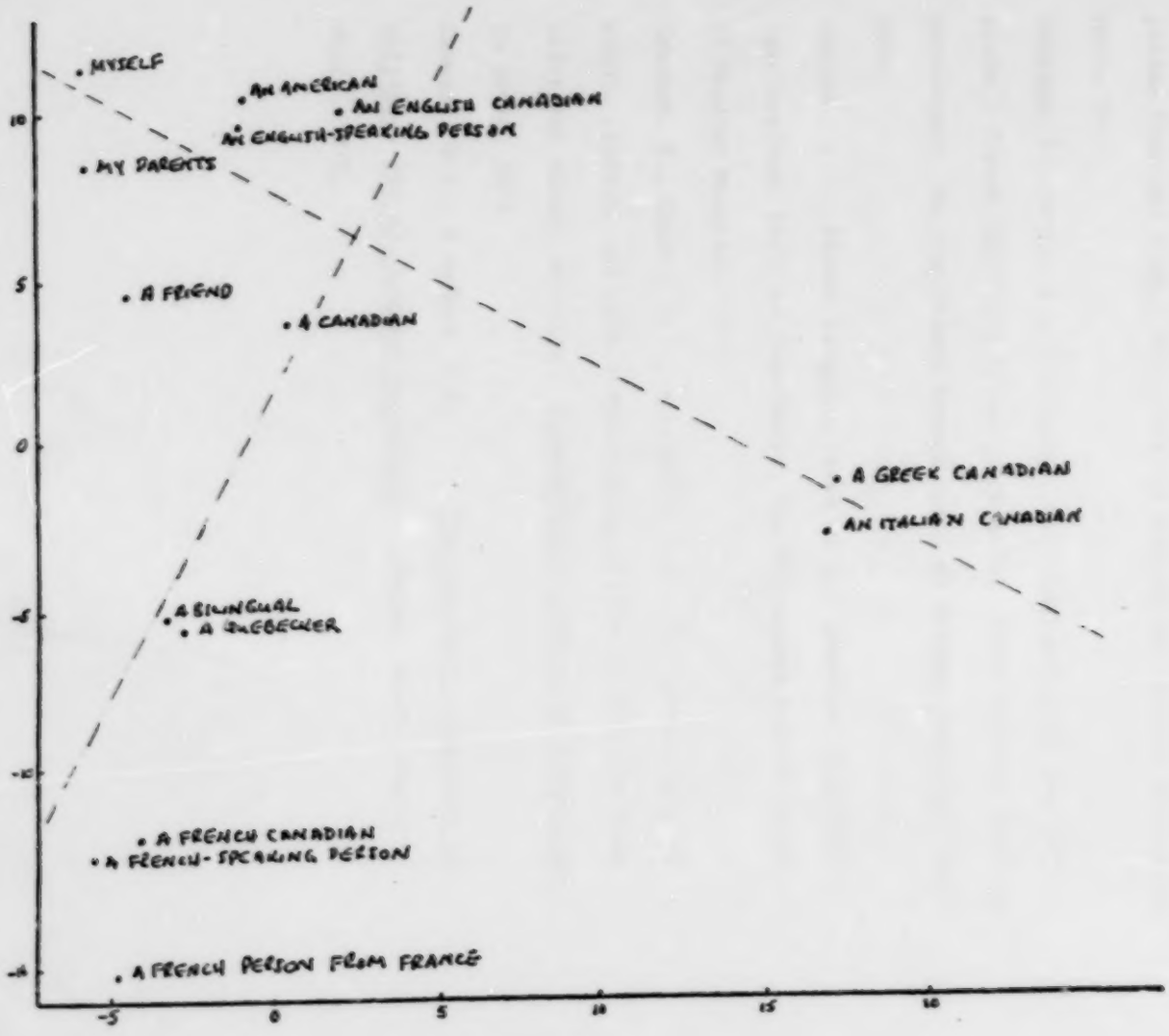


FIGURE 2B: TWO DIMENSIONAL SOLUTION FOR ENGLISH STUDENTS WITH SUGGESTED AXES



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Footnotes

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